

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

The present Amendment is accompanied by an RCE entering the amendment filed May 29, 2009.

Support for the above amendments to Claim 1 is found throughout the originally-filed specification. See, for example, paragraph [0035] (placement of the metal member in the heating furnace) and paragraph [0030] (maintenance of a positive pressure in the heating furnace). These same portions of the specification support new Claims 18 and 19.

The Examiner is thanked for his consideration of the amendment filed May 29, 2009, and for his thorough comments in the Advisory Action of June 5, 2009. As noted by the above amendments, Claim 1 has been amended so as to require the placing of the metal member in the heating furnace. This of course is required in order for the HCN to act on the surface of the metal member. However, it is not required that the metal member provide catalytic action in the formation of the HCN, as this can be done by any one of, or any combination of, the metal member, a metal-made inner wall of the furnace, and a metal-made jig. If the Examiner requires any further clarification on this point he is requested to contact the undersigned in order to expedite the processing of this case.

As further noted by the above amendment to Claim 1, the internal pressure of the heating furnace has now limited to that of atmospheric pressure or greater. This is explained in the present application and provides a process which is distinctly different from anything disclosed or suggested in Kubota, which discloses vacuum carburizing. Notably, Kubota uses a vacuum furnace to effect the disclosed carburizing treatment at less than or equal to 1 kPa. See, e.g., column 5, lines 4ff of Kubota. In addition to the stark difference between the internal pressure of the heating furnace in the present invention as opposed to that in Kubota, it is further believed that in Kubota under such vacuum conditions HCN formation is not possible.

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Accordingly, and in view of the above amendments and remarks, and those filed May 29, 2009, now entered herein, Applicants respectfully submit that the present application is in condition for allowance, and early notice to this effect is respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,

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A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Treanor', is written over a horizontal line.

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